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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Seventh session
New York, 21 April-2 May 2008
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
Half-day discussion on indigenous languages

Report of the international expert group meeting on indigenous languages

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the issues discussed at the international expert group meeting on indigenous languages, held from 8 to 10 January 2008, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Some of the issues discussed included the importance of linguistic diversity, the connection between language rights and all other fundamental rights, a concern for the lack of urgency while the majority of all indigenous languages are threatened with extinction, and proposals for the revitalization, promotion and protection of indigenous languages.

* E/C.19/2008/1.

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I. Introduction

1. The year 2008 has been proclaimed by the General Assembly as the International Year of Languages. Responding to the need for concrete public policies for the protection and promotion of indigenous languages, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, at its sixth session, recommended that the Economic and Social Council authorize the convening of an international expert group meeting on indigenous languages. At its regular session in July 2007, the Council approved the Forum's recommendation in decision 2007/244 to hold the meeting, which was organized by the secretariat of the Permanent Forum.

II. Organization of work

A. Attendance

2. The following members of the Permanent Forum attended the workshop: Carlos Mamani Condori, Hassan Id Balkassm, Paimaneh Hasteh, Tonya Gonella Frichner and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz.

3. The following invited experts from the seven indigenous sociocultural regions participated in the workshop: Lydia Nyati Ramohobo (Africa); Carl Christian Olsen (Arctic); Anne Lasimbang (Asia); Luis Montaluisa Chasiquiza (Central and South America and the Caribbean); Fenya Likhanova (Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia); Priscilla Settee (North America); and Jeanie Bell (Pacific).

4. The workshop was attended by observers from departments, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, observers from other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Member States. The list of participants is contained in annex II.

B. Documentation

5. The participants had before them a draft agenda and programme of work, a background paper and documents prepared by participating experts. In addition, a number of documents were submitted to the meeting by observers. The documentation is available on the website of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/EGM_IL.html.

C. Opening of the meeting

6. At the opening of the meeting, the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development made an opening statement on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

D. Election of officers

7. Ms. Tauli-Corpuz was elected Chairperson of the workshop and Ms. Gonella Frichner was elected Co-chairperson of the workshop. Ms. Andriamiesza of the

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was elected Rapporteur.

E. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

8. On 10 January 2008, the workshop adopted, by consensus, the conclusions and recommendations contained in section III below. The workshop decided to annex to the present report a poem written in the Evenk language and translated into Russian (see annex V).

F. Closure of the workshop

9. The meeting was closed after the conclusions and recommendations were adopted in the final meeting, held on 10 January 2008.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Overview

10. The meeting took note of the richness of the written contributions of the meeting, as well as the oral interventions that were delivered and the many examples of good practices that were presented.

11. Indigenous peoples and their languages are threatened around the world. The loss of indigenous languages signifies not only the loss of traditional knowledge but also the loss of cultural diversity and spirituality. Dire as this situation is, there is a lack of awareness on the part of some Governments, indigenous peoples and the intergovernmental system of the urgency for policy measures to reverse this trend.

12. Nevertheless, the international community has prepared a solid international legal normative framework that is relevant for the protection of indigenous languages, of which the most recent one is the newly adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A list of these instruments is available in annex IV.

13. Indigenous languages are treasures of vast traditional knowledge concerning ecological systems and processes and how to protect and use some of the most vulnerable and biologically diverse ecosystems in the world. It is no coincidence that the areas where indigenous peoples live are the areas that contain the greatest biological diversity. In fact, biological, linguistic and cultural diversity are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, so when an indigenous language is lost, so too is the traditional knowledge for how to maintain aspects of the world's biological diversity. The protection of indigenous languages is therefore not only a cultural and moral imperative, but an important aspect of global efforts to address biodiversity loss, climate change and other environmental challenges.

14. Language rights must be implemented as a collective and an individual right. It is crucial to recognize that indigenous peoples' language rights include, but are not limited to:

(a) The right to maintain and to use their own language;

(b) The right to have indigenous languages recognized in constitutions and laws;

(c) The right to maintain personal names, place names and the proper names of their languages;

(d) The right to be educated in the mother tongue (either in State schools or in their own schools);

(e) The right to use indigenous languages in court and administrative proceedings;

(f) The right to non-discrimination on the grounds of language in such domains as work, social security, health, family life, education, cultural life and freedom of speech;

(g) The right to take part in public affairs and public service without discrimination on the grounds of language;

(h) The right to establish indigenous media in indigenous languages as well as to have access to mainstream media in indigenous languages.

B. Examples of good practices

15. The meeting was presented with a number of examples of good practices ranging from university programmes to children's centres to political movements. As diverse as these examples were, they all illustrated the importance of indigenous peoples' agency, while also emphasizing the crucial role that the State and other parties play. For example, efforts to promote newspapers, community radio, song, dance and poetry and other literature in indigenous languages are beneficial. It is also seen as a positive step when institutions of higher education use indigenous languages, while translations of literary works into indigenous languages serve to strengthen the language.

16. Initiatives that have proved beneficial to the strengthening of indigenous languages are government-appointed language committees, such as in Greenland. Those committees can develop normative or standardized usage of the language in the contexts of education, communication and legislation.

17. Other positive initiatives involve translation of relevant laws and important political texts into indigenous languages so that indigenous peoples can better participate in the political sphere. It is important to translate legal texts into indigenous languages and use them in legal proceedings. There are also positive examples of school boards, health care systems, and corporations that have developed a process of involving indigenous language in the legislative procedures.

18. It is essential to include indigenous languages and cultures into early childhood care and education curriculum, and promote multilingualism, as is the case in Sabah, Borneo, Malaysia. The early childhood centres described at the meeting prepare children to enter government primary schools and also strengthen their foundation to understand their own languages and practice their own cultures.

19. An example from Australia emphasized the importance of indigenous teachers' developing their own language programmes, their own educational material and the use of indigenous languages in the media and in publications.

20. The creation of schools in the Russian Federation for children whose parents lead nomadic lives is another example of attempts to meet the educational needs of indigenous children, as are some bilingual education programmes in North Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation.

21. Language movements have been successful when the promotion of linguistic diversity has been promoted as a national responsibility, such as with the movement for the Amazigh language in Morocco.

22. The struggle of indigenous peoples in Ecuador has led to the State recognition of indigenous education systems through the establishment of the National Department of Intercultural and Bilingual Education,[1] which is managed by indigenous peoples, while in Bolivia, the Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para los Países Andinos,[2] a cooperation between the San Simon University in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and a bilateral organization has awarded Masters degrees in linguistic, cultural and bilingual education to over 100 indigenous students from six Andean countries.

23. Language immersion for children and adults of the Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake in North America has produced positive results for language revival, where activities include the training of trainers, language lessons through television, television series for children and commandeering popular media and modernization.[3] In addition to the full immersion programmes, other positive examples include the Onondaga Nation and Tuscarora Nation, which also teach their languages in their Nation schools.

24. A successful initiative in Canada has been the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting Programme, which has provided funding to organizations such as the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation for close to 25 years to support the production of television and radio programming for broadcast in aboriginal languages.

25. The Inter-American Development Bank has a databank on indigenous legislation in Latin America.[4] One of the indicators is the extent to which language rights are recognized.

26. The meeting welcomed the examples of work of United Nations agencies, indigenous peoples' organizations and NGOs that have translated the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant United Nations documents.

C. Challenges, gaps and concerns

27. Language rights, as part of cultural rights, are inadequately recognized in many countries. They have been neglected in national legislation and policy and are often excluded from the realm of human rights and human rights implementation processes. Language rights, as part of cultural rights, are also integral elements of the right to self-determination and should be viewed within the context of the universal, interdependent and complementary nature of human rights.

[1] See http://www.dineib.gov.ec.

[2] See http://www.proeibandes.org.

[3] See http://www.korkahnawake.org and http://www.kahnawakelonghouse.com.

[4] See http://www.iadb.org/sds/Ind/ley/leyn/datamap.cfm?lang=EN.

28. The importance of languages cannot be undervalued, as they reflect the world views of indigenous communities. For example, customary laws of indigenous communities are often in their languages, and if the language is lost the community may not fully understand its laws and system of governance. Loss of language also undermines the identity and spirituality of the community and the individual. The meeting emphasized the importance of looking at language rights from a holistic perspective, and that language rights cannot be fully enjoyed in the absence of other basic human rights, health, decent work or self-determination.

29. In many countries, discriminatory language policies from the colonial era continued after independence, favouring languages that the majority of citizens do not speak as the first language in their homes. Policies, legislation and their implementation often discriminate against indigenous languages in a number of ways, including attaching special privileges in terms of participation in governance, territorial privileges or representation in the media, to speakers of certain non-indigenous languages. The prevailing situation in the world today is that certain languages are given official status and recognition while the majority of languages, and, in particular, indigenous languages, are denied legal recognition. This deplorable imbalance weakens indigenous languages and contributes to views that portray indigenous languages as inferior and give room for discriminatory and corrupt practices that are difficult to combat through legal or political means.

30. An overwhelming majority of all countries have more than one language spoken within their borders, and governments frequently cite a lack of resources as a major obstacle in protecting indigenous languages. Although this is sometimes a valid concern, it is important to view indigenous languages not as a financial drain but as a valuable resource, that language diversity is a major contribution to the wealth of the country's cultural heritage and therefore there is a need for more political will to provide the resources needed to preserve and develop this heritage. It should also be stressed that the promotion of indigenous languages does not undermine national unity; on the contrary it is a positive contribution to national heritage. Furthermore, indigenous languages often do not coincide with national borders and they should therefore be dealt with at the national level and in the context of cross-border cooperation.

31. Although language loss has happened in the past, humanity is today facing an unprecedented threat to linguistic diversity and this threat is most acutely felt by indigenous peoples. Although language loss is attributed to globalization and migration, it is also a result of systemic and deliberate efforts to destroy languages using racist and discriminatory policies and laws.

32. Past and current experiences have shown, for example, that whole generations of indigenous children who were placed in boarding schools away from their communities lost their language. A number of experimental programmes are attempting to create culturally appropriate and bilingual schools that may reverse this trend.

33. Some States seek the revitalization, preservation and promotion of indigenous languages, but language programmes are frequently underfunded, while smaller language communities struggle to receive any funding at all. Where some funding becomes available, the sustainability of such programmes becomes a challenge.

34. The meeting was concerned with the fact that a lack of funding (especially predictable funding) and political will to promote and protect indigenous languages remains a major challenge.

35. It is another challenge to produce a curriculum for indigenous children that is relevant to them and their communities, while also following national curriculums prescribed by the government. Funding, teacher training and support are needed to develop these programmes that respect and promote indigenous cultures and languages, while also providing indigenous children with the capacities to become productive members of national societies.

36. Although indigenous languages have a great deal in common and share many of the same challenges, there are some differences, especially based on the number of speakers and the different national contexts in which indigenous peoples live. For example, the challenges that indigenous language speakers are faced with in the developed world tend to be related to revitalization and attempts to repair the damage that has been done to indigenous languages over generations of culturally detrimental policies, while in the developing world, there is a greater focus on maintenance and strengthening of indigenous languages. Although there are exceptions to this generalization, the meeting was concerned at the high proportion of indigenous languages in developed countries that are endangered.

37. Finally, the meeting was concerned about the objectives of some programmes for endangered languages that may not coincide with those of indigenous peoples. Recording a language as an archival artefact is a preservation attempt that, although worthy in its own right, often does not adequately meet the community objectives of language revitalization and increasing the number of fluent speakers.

D. Recommendations

38. The agenda of the meeting was divided into five different themes (see annex I). However, owing to the fact that those issues are cross-cutting and the recommendations are not easily categorized under one theme or another, the recommendations will be categorized according to the main addressee. It should be noted that a great many of the recommendations can and should be implemented through the cooperation of various interested actors, and not only the main addressee.

Recommendations to States

39. The promotion and protection of indigenous peoples' language rights and associated rights are a part of cultural democracy. Those rights should form an integral part of development policies across various sectors, such as health, education and agriculture.

40. **States should:**

(a) Take necessary measures to implement relevant recommendations of human rights treaty bodies and special rapporteurs regarding the recognition, protection, promotion and revitalization of indigenous languages;

(b) Use the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other relevant human rights standards as the basis to develop

policies and laws related to the promotion and strengthening of indigenous languages;

(c) Take adequate constitutional and other legislative measures for the recognition of indigenous languages and develop policies and programmes that strengthen the daily use of indigenous languages at all levels, in public and private institutions, within and outside indigenous communities;

(d) Ensure adequate funding for the preservation, revitalization and promotion of indigenous languages and cultures, recognizing the cost of implementing programmes and projects in remote areas;

(e) Raise the prestige of indigenous languages by supporting efforts towards standardization, by establishing indigenous universities and by promoting the use of indigenous languages in public administration;

(f) Ensure that language is included as one of the indicators to identify indigenous persons, with consideration of the census as an informative tool that gives relevant information regarding indigenous peoples. Although the language or mother tongue variable is important in national censuses to help disaggregate data on indigenous peoples, it is not sufficient to identify ethnicity. Indigenous experts should participate in identifying those variables, and in all other aspects of the censuses, including their formulation, training of census takers, registration, analysis and dissemination. At the same time, it must be recognized also that some indigenous peoples are wary of responding to censuses;

(g) Adopt legislation acknowledging that the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is their inalienable cultural heritage and embodies their cultural identity and make such legislation and information available in local indigenous languages;

(h) Develop quality indigenous education policies, guaranteeing the right to mother tongue education, with the participation of indigenous peoples in all levels of planning and implementation, respecting the principle of free, prior and informed consent;

(i) Support the creation of indigenous universities, language departments in universities and other degree programmes to promote indigenous languages as a vehicle and expression of intangible culture, traditions and expressions;

(j) Protect and promote indigenous languages by supporting indigenous use of current and emerging multimedia technology, establishing quota systems or similar mechanisms that ensure adequate representation of indigenous languages in public- and private-owned media by providing funding for the publication of indigenous literature, and by promoting the use of indigenous symbols and signs in the public sphere;

(k) Guarantee the right to mother tongue education for indigenous children, regardless of the number of its speakers and ensure the teaching of those languages to indigenous children who do not know them;

(l) Respect the wishes of indigenous peoples living in voluntary isolation to continue living in that way and adopt concrete measures to respect the language rights of those peoples when they are exposed to outside contact;

(m) Ensure the participation of indigenous peoples not only in the decisions related to the status of indigenous languages in the whole society but also in the decisions related to the linguistic corpus (alphabet, orthographic norms, technical terminology, etc.);

(n) Ensure that an enabling linguistic environment exists in which speakers of indigenous languages are not forced or coerced to give up their languages in order to succeed in national life.

Recommendations to the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

41. **Given the importance of human rights treaty bodies and relevant special rapporteurs in monitoring the implementation of language rights of indigenous peoples, indigenous peoples should continue using those mechanisms to advocate that Governments fulfil all their obligations, including their treaty obligations.**

42. **The United Nations system and other international organizations are called upon to take the following actions:**

(a) The international community should begin drafting a convention to protect indigenous languages, identities, and rights and establishing international instruments to collect information and pursue violations related to language, cultural and indigenous rights, both in the public and private sectors, such as establishing an authority on language rights and a rapporteur, commissioner or agency on language discrimination;

(b) The international community should promote measures to create accountability for the deliberate destruction of indigenous languages. The new expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples of the Human Rights Council should conduct a study exploring the deliberate destruction of indigenous languages as a gross human rights violation;

(c) UNESCO, with the cooperation of Governments, should establish possibilities for the more effective engagement of indigenous peoples' organizations in standard setting activities and programmes of policy development and implementation of the legal instruments of UNESCO. The organization should also provide funding support for those issues;

(d) UNESCO should disseminate more widely among indigenous peoples information on its various standard setting instruments related to language, cultural diversity and cultural heritage and enhance the capacities of indigenous peoples to use them;

(e) The meeting noted that filtering language promotion to the community level can be an issue, especially when government frameworks are not in place. The language standards and policies of UNESCO may be difficult to implement at the local level since the organization works through the government level first. Therefore, it is recommended that UNESCO strengthen its working relationship with NGOs and civil society organizations so that

language policies are implemented directly at the level of indigenous communities and seek government support where possible;

(f) UNESCO should, in collaboration with States and indigenous experts, work towards the development of a comprehensive set of standards on indigenous languages and identity data, variables and indicators, including census, that will help identify and address the state, trends and strategies in the maintenance, revitalization and protection of indigenous languages;

(g) UNESCO and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues should cooperate in producing a brochure or pamphlet aimed at Governments on the importance of supporting/protecting indigenous languages;

(h) The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) should continue to safeguard and make use of indigenous languages as well as to acknowledge the valuable insights they provide for an understanding of rural livelihoods, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources and many other issues related to food security and rural development;

(i) FAO should also continue to support indigenous and rural communities in partnership and cooperation with indigenous peoples' organizations and United Nations agencies in the use of their mother tongues and in the efforts to make their means of communication more effective;

(j) United Nations agencies and other international organizations should translate programme and project documents and publications that are relevant to indigenous peoples into indigenous languages. The translations should be made accessible and be downloadable free of charge online;

(k) The biggest challenge is among those indigenous peoples who live in urban areas where they do not use the language as much for various reasons. In this regard, special attention should be given to their situation. The Permanent Forum and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues should focus on ways to protect language during situations of migration by indigenous peoples, paying close attention to the role of women as transmitters of language to their children;

(l) The international community should fund programmes that allow for an exchange of language programme ideas across indigenous communities.

Recommendations to indigenous peoples

43. Indigenous peoples should:

(a) Make efforts to stabilize their languages and keep them alive;

(b) Recognize, bearing in mind the important role of men, that indigenous women are often the primary transmitters of indigenous languages to future generations and should empower them for a greater participation in decision-making and language revitalization;

(c) Endeavour to familiarize themselves with existing legal instruments, in particular the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and treaty bodies of the United Nations and other United Nations

agencies such as UNESCO, and equip themselves to use them to protect and promote their language and cultural rights;

(d) Cooperate with other indigenous peoples on language matters, exchanging experiences and good examples;

(e) Promote awareness among speakers of indigenous languages of the impending loss and inherent value of their languages in the face of assimilation policies and educational institutions which have imposed hegemonic ideologies that devalue indigenous languages.

Other recommendations

44. **The following actions are recommended:**

(a) States, indigenous peoples and international organizations should collaborate in translating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into indigenous languages and disseminate these widely;

(b) Funding agencies and donors should support revitalization programmes that endeavour to produce new speakers — not just documenting or archiving — for the most critically endangered languages, whose most urgent need is the immediate development of new fluent speakers to carry forward the words and knowledge of the ageing elders;

(c) States, United Nations agencies, donors, research institutions, religious organizations, the media and NGOs should ensure the proper and correct identification of the names of indigenous languages;

(d) Increasing the number of fluent speakers should be the main objective of these language revitalization efforts, while indigenous languages that are not necessarily under immediate threat of extinction face different challenges, such as promotion and to be used in full equality with other national official languages. Moreover, efforts of individual experts to salvage and promote indigenous languages will not be effective unless the concerned community desires such efforts and takes action in that direction. Indigenous peoples themselves must claim ownership of their languages and direct revitalization efforts of their languages.

Preliminary ideas regarding a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education

45. The meeting agreed that conditions are right for a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education. United Nations Member States have recognized the importance of linguistic diversity by proclaiming 2008 as the International Year of Languages, the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples was recently adopted, and UNESCO has carried out a preliminary study on the technical and judicial aspects of a possible international normative instrument for the protection of indigenous and endangered languages.

46. Although conditions for such a world conference are relatively positive, a number of issues need to be resolved. It is essential that this world conference include the widest possible participation of indigenous representatives, and that they be actively involved in all aspects of the conference, from its preparations, right

through the drafting of its documents and implementing its outcomes. It is equally important that this world conference be a United Nations world conference, ensuring the active participation and commitment of Member States, thus increasing its impact on indigenous languages.

47. The conference might be organized through the close cooperation of the Permanent Forum and UNESCO and other relevant United Nations agencies. Its preparation would require regional preparatory meetings of experts and the active use of other international conferences for awareness-raising and input into the conference.

48. Finally, for this world conference to become a reality, it is essential to ensure the political and financial commitment of a Member State or States to champion the idea of the conference, while funding may include inter-agency efforts, in addition to voluntary funding from States, indigenous peoples' organizations, foundations and others.

49. The agenda of the conference could include the following subjects: constitutional and other juridical protection of indigenous languages; democratic policies in the promotion of indigenous languages; actions by indigenous peoples for the protection and promotion of indigenous languages; and promotion of indigenous languages in the media.

Annex I

Programme of work

Date/time	*Item/programme*	
Tuesday, 8 January		
10-10.30 a.m.		**Opening of the workshop by the Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs**
	Item 1	**Election of Chairperson and Rapporteur**
	Item 2	**Adoption of agenda and organization of work**
10.30 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Item 3**	**Working towards concrete actions and legislative development aimed at eliminating discrimination against the current use of indigenous languages**
		Presentations
		Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo **Carl Christian Olsen**
3-6 p.m.	**Item 4**	**Developing programmes aimed at promoting the empowerment of indigenous languages through all mediums, including radio and television**
		Presentations
		Jeanie Bell **Hassan Id Balkassm**
Wednesday, 9 January		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	**Item 5**	**Supporting and increasing the number of centres for the study of indigenous languages**
		Presentations
		Anne Lasimbang
3 p.m.-6 p.m.	**Item 6**	**Financing and supporting schemes for special projects that are formulated by indigenous peoples and are focused on revitalization and rescue of threatened languages**
		Presentations
		Priscilla Settee **Luis Montaluisa Chasiquiza** **Fenya Likhanova**

Date/time	*Item/programme*	
Thursday, 10 January		
10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Item 7	**Designing, in consultation with indigenous peoples and the Permanent Forum, the organization of a world conference on linguistic diversity, indigenous languages, identity and education, as a contribution to the programme of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People**
		Presentations
		UNESCO
3-6 p.m.	Item 8	**Adoption of conclusions and recommendations**

Annex II

List of participants

Members of the Forum

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

Hassan Id Balkassm

Carlos Mamani Condori

Paimaneh Hasteh

Tonya Gonella Frichner

Invited experts

Jeanie Bell (Pacific)

Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo (Africa)

Carl Christian Olsen (Arctic)

Luis Montaluisa Chasiquiza (Latin America and the Caribbean)

Fenya Likhanova (Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia)

Anne Lasimbang (Asia)

Priscilla Settee (North America)

United Nations and other international organizations

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

Inter-American Development Bank

International Fund for Agricultural Development

International Labour Organization

International Organization for Migration

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

United Nations Environment Programme

World Intellectual Property Organization

Non-governmental organizations

American Association of Crimean Tatars

Cultural Survival

ERA-ONLUS/Transnational Non-violent Radical Party

Ermineskin Cree Nation

First Peoples Human Rights Coalition

Foundation for Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples in Crimea

Fundación para la Educación en Contextos de Multilingüismo y Pluriculturalidad

Habitat Pro

International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development

Inuit Broadcasting Corporation

Inuit Circumpolar Council-Canada

Kahnawake Education Center

Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitóhkwa

Loretto Community

Mohawk Nation at Kahnawake

NIU Development

Universidad Católica de Temuco

Programa de Formación de Maestros Bilingües de la Amazonia Peruana

Red por los derechos educativos y linguisticos de los pueblos indígenas de Chile

Regional Assembly of First Nations of Treaties 6, 7, 8 (Alberta)

United Confederation of Taíno People

United Nations Association of Togo

University of Saskatchewan

VIVAT International

States

Canada

Chile

Ecuador

Guatemala

Mexico

Indonesia

Japan

Nicaragua

Russian Federation

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Local governments

Government of the Territory of Nunavut (Canada)

Annex III

List of documents

1. Draft agenda
2. Indigenous languages: background paper
3. Expert Group on Indigenous Languages: draft programme of work
4. Presentation to the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages (Jeanie Bell)
5. Teaching indigenous language through early childhood care and education for indigenous children in Sabbah, Borneo (Anne Lasimbang)
6. Lenguas indígenas vivas del Ecuador (Luis Montaluisa Chasiquiza)
7. Inuit language (Carl Christian Olsen)
8. Indigenous languages in Botswana (Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo)
9. Legal and constitutional status of the Amazigh language in Morocco and North Africa (Hassan Id Balkassm)
10. Qullasuyu: Lengua y cultura en los andes del sur (Carlos Mamani Condori)
11. Indigenous languages in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity

    Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
12. The situation of small-numbered indigenous languages of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation (Fenya Likhanova)
13. Native languages supporting indigenous knowledge (Priscilla Settee)
14. The role of the International Labour Organization in the promotion and protection of indigenous languages (Morse Caoagas Flores)
15. Human rights legal framework and indigenous languages

    Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
16. Contribution of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
17. Presentation to the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages

    Kanien'kehá:ka Onkwawén:na Raotitóhkwa Language and Cultural Centre
18. Presentation to the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages

    United Confederation of Taíno People
19. The protection of Indigenous Languages: compilation of the work of treaty bodies (1994-2006) and special procedures (2006-)

    Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
20. Presentation to the Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages

    United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
21. Implementing the dream: our made-in-Nunavut Language Legislation

    Government of the Territory of Nunavut (Canada)

Annex IV

List of international instruments relevant to the protection of indigenous languages

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace (2003)

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)

UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (and Action Plan) (2001)

Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993)

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992)

Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992)

Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989)

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

UNESCO Recommendation on the development of adult education (1976)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)

ILO Convention No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (1960)

UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)

ILO Convention No. 107 concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and other Tribal or Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries (1957)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Annex V

[Original: Russian]

My Language

If I forget my native speech,
And the songs that my people sing
What use are my eyes and ears
What use is my mouth

If I forget the smell of the earth
And do not serve it well
What use are my hands
Why am I living in the world

How can I believe the foolish idea
That my language is weak and poor
If my mother's last words
Were in Evenk

Alitet Nemtushkin

United Nations E/C.19/2008/4

Economic and Social Council

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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Seventh session
New York, 21 April-2 May 2008
Items 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Human rights: dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people and other special rapporteurs

Half-day discussion on the Pacific

Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Summary

The Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) originated in 1993 in response to an expressed need within the United Nations system for training in modern techniques of negotiation and mediation. UNITAR has been conducting training for mid-level and senior-level diplomats from around the world and United Nations staff on conflict prevention and resolution since 1993, and for representatives of indigenous peoples since 2000.

The UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives was developed on the basis of the requests of indigenous peoples' representatives from around the world at consultations in Geneva, and on the recommendations of Special Rapporteurs, to provide advanced training in conflict analysis and negotiation to representatives of indigenous peoples.

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More than 330 indigenous representatives from around the world have been trained in six international programmes and five regional training programmes, including the most recent training programme organized in the Pacific region, focusing on conflict analysis, negotiation and relationship-building among stakeholders. In addition, UNITAR contributed to the regional training on conflict resolution and peacebuilding for 100 indigenous and tribal representatives from north-east India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal, organized by five UNITAR graduates from the region in 2007.

In addition, UNITAR was asked to organize a seminar for members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in advance of the first session of the Forum in 2002. The session involved United Nations staff from 16 agencies, funds, programmes and departments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

The main objectives of the UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives are: to strengthen participants' capacities to analyse conflict; to identify the needs, fears, concerns and aspirations of all parties to a conflict; and, based upon this and engaged in dialogue with partners, to formulate mutually beneficial and sustainable options to address problems. The focus is on the process of analysing and dealing with conflict in a constructive manner.

With strengthened tools of conflict analysis, negotiation and relationship-building, indigenous representatives are further equipped to engage in dialogue on issues to address the priorities of their communities and to improve the lives of their peoples. The training aims to strengthen indigenous representatives' abilities to negotiate in order to improve the situations of their peoples in all of the areas under the mandate of the Permanent Forum: health; education; culture; environment; economic and social development; and human rights.

I. Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples

1. In his address to the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that if the twenty-first century is to be the "age of prevention", indigenous peoples must be actively involved in decisions that affect them. As marginalization and exclusion from political and economic processes lead to alienation and poverty and constitute some of the root causes of conflict, enhancing capacity and opportunities for the meaningful participation of indigenous women and men in decision-making and political processes comprise some concrete mechanisms for the prevention of violent conflict. Inclusive, consultative approaches also enhance understanding of the needs, perspectives, experiences and diverse cultures of indigenous peoples, which can assist in the formulation of appropriate policies and programmes that best address their respective needs in a sustainable manner.

2. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) training focuses on strengthening negotiation skills so that indigenous peoples' representatives may more effectively negotiate in development and other processes that affect them. Senior indigenous experts, who serve as resource persons for the UNITAR international and regional training programmes, present case studies on conflict and negotiation processes regarding development and resource issues, as they are key conflictual matters indigenous peoples and States face. Special Rapporteurs are also invited to address the group on a range of development issues, policies and programmes relating to land and resources. The Millennium Development Goals and reports, as well as United Nations reports on dialogue processes regarding natural resources, are provided to each participant as reference materials in their handbook for the training.

3. The programme also examines mechanisms and processes that promote participation of diverse groups in order to counter marginalization and exclusion. Participants then engage in negotiation simulations focusing on resource issues and inclusive political participation processes in order to build on their capacity to negotiate satisfactorily on behalf of their organizations and communities and to develop mutually beneficial, sustainable options.

4. UNITAR contributes to the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues and United Nations efforts to promote the increased involvement of indigenous peoples in development processes at multiple levels.

II. Territories, lands and natural resources

5. The UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives focuses on strengthening the conflict analysis and negotiation skills of indigenous peoples' representatives from around the world.

6. As conflict over land and resource issues, and marginalization from political and economic processes are two of the most challenging areas indigenous peoples continue to face, the majority of cases and negotiation simulations in the training programme focus on such matters. The programme reviews both rights-based and problem-solving negotiation processes to strengthen the capacity of indigenous representatives to analyse root causes of conflict and engage in constructive

dialogue with Governments, the private sector and other communities so as to resolve conflict in a mutually beneficial and sustainable manner.

7. In order to strengthen the capacity of indigenous representatives to engage in constructive dialogue processes on the issues of lands, territories and resources, the training programme invites Special Rapporteurs, Permanent Forum members and other senior indigenous experts to conduct sessions on successful negotiation processes regarding land and resource issues, and on processes to promote and protect land and resource rights. Specific land and resource cases are presented by indigenous experts from different regions, highlighting precedent-setting cases and remaining challenges. Initiatives to facilitate dialogue between indigenous representatives, Governments and the private sector are also highlighted.

8. The 2007 regional training programme for indigenous representatives of the Pacific included sessions conducted by the Permanent Forum member from the Pacific and by a senior indigenous university lecturer from the Pacific who examined negotiation processes with extractive industries and other private sectors actors, and negotiations with Governments on land and resource issues.

9. Furthermore, regional organization mechanisms and other dialogue processes are reviewed. Senior indigenous experts and United Nations system staff members present information on United Nations and international conventions, mechanisms and policies that promote and protect human rights and facilitate dialogue among concerned parties.

10. Extensive documentation, including United Nations reports, guidelines and studies are made available to participants to strengthen their knowledge of conventions and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of their rights.

III. Human rights

11. In order to contribute to the recommended dissemination of information and capacity-building efforts in human rights, at each UNITAR training programme, a senior indigenous lawyer and professor conducts several sessions on United Nations and regional mechanisms to promote dialogue and action on human rights and indigenous issues. Moreover, chapters of the guide developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on indigenous peoples and human rights are provided to each participant as part of their handbook of readings and reference material. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will be disseminated and the implementation of the Declaration will be a subject of discussion at future international and regional training programmes.

12. At a number of training sessions, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people or a member of his staff addressed participants on his mandate and activities as well as the process for raising concerns and rights violations. The Special Rapporteur on the permanent sovereignty of indigenous peoples over natural resources also presented a session on her mandate and activities to the international training programme. The reports of both Special Rapporteurs are provided in the participant handbook of readings distributed at each training session.

13. The Secretary of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations served as a resource person for both regional training sessions in Africa and for the international training highlighting opportunities for creating spaces for dialogue in the United Nations system and outlining a rights-based approach to development. A representative of the Ministry of Justice of the Congo was invited to share the draft national law on the protection of indigenous peoples' rights at the 2006 Africa regional training session. They have carried out intensive consultations as part of the elaboration of this law with indigenous representatives and experts as well as with OHCHR and the International Labour Organization.

14. Staff members of regional organizations are also invited to speak on mandates, mechanisms and opportunities for engaging in the promotion and protection of indigenous rights at the regional level. Regional representatives from the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, two Commissioners from the African Union's African Commission on Human and People's Rights, including the Chairman of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities, as well as two indigenous expert members of the Working Group, have served as resource persons for the training. Indigenous resource persons serving in government have addressed training participants on successes and challenges in the area of governance.

15. The negotiation training examines traditional negotiation and the rights-based approach to negotiation, then introduces an interest-based model to analyse the concerns of the parties and engage in dialogue so as to address conflicts in a mutually beneficial manner.

IV. Indigenous women

16. UNITAR actively seeks referrals of indigenous women for each training programme, both as resource persons and as participants. Women comprise 40 per cent of training participants, with the aim of building on their capacity to analyse sources of conflict, identify the interests and concerns of the various parties involved and affected, and engage in dialogue and negotiation to improve the condition of life for their communities in all sectors. The Participants' Forum of the training session is normally chaired by an indigenous woman. Representatives working in different sectors and reflecting a gender and regional balance are invited to present information on initiatives they are undertaking in the areas of environment, development, education, gender, culture, promotion of human rights, peacebuilding and dialogue with Governments and the private sector on land and resource issues in order to share strategies and remaining challenges.

17. The UNITAR training programme invites indigenous women involved in peacebuilding initiatives to participate in the training to share their experiences and challenges with other representatives and to further enhance the capacity of indigenous women in conflict analysis, negotiation and peacebuilding. At the regional training session for indigenous representatives of the Pacific, a senior indigenous participant presented information on women building peace in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, highlighting challenges faced and strategies devised by women for addressing them.

18. Senior indigenous women are actively sought to serve as resource persons for the training programme in order to share their strategies, experiences, challenges

and insights on a whole range of issues of concern to indigenous women, men and youth. Indigenous women who have served as resource persons for the UNITAR training programme include: a former Government minister from Vanuatu; a Maori senior university lecturer from New Zealand; the Chairperson of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, who is now a Permanent Forum member; a Counsellor in the Greenland Home Rule Government; the Minister of Culture and Sports of Guatemala, who serves as a Permanent Forum member; the previous Permanent Forum member from the Pacific; a Member of Parliament from Burundi; the Vice-Chancellor of a university in Nicaragua; the chairperson of an indigenous alliance in the Philippines; an education officer from the Ministry of Education of Kenya, who is also women's representative for an indigenous non-governmental organization; and an expert member of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

19. Other women who have served as resource persons for UNITAR training sessions include the Special Rapporteur on the permanent sovereignty of indigenous peoples over natural resources, the Secretary of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations and other United Nations agency representatives. UNITAR will continue to identify and invite senior female resource persons and participants who contribute substantively to the excellence of the programme.

V. Challenges

20. As UNITAR receives no funds from the regular United Nations budget, funds for all programmes and staff salaries must be raised for each training programme through requests to Governments and foundations.

VI. Programmes regarding indigenous issues within the Institute

21. UNITAR was established in 1965 as an autonomous body within the United Nations with the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization through appropriate training and research. It is governed by a Board of Trustees and headed by an Executive Director. The Institute is supported by voluntary contributions from Governments, inter-governmental organizations, foundations and other non-governmental sources.

22. The UNITAR Programme in Peacemaking and Preventive Diplomacy was initiated in 1993 to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization's efforts in conflict prevention and resolution. Since then, the programme has expanded to provide a range of research and training involving mid-level and senior-level United Nations staff, diplomats, indigenous peoples' representatives, regional organization staff and civil society representatives.

23. The international UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives has been conducted annually at the time of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held at the United Nations in Geneva (2000, 2001 and 2003-2006). A regional training programme is conducted in a different part of the world each year.

Regional training sessions have been held to date in Mexico, for indigenous peoples of the Americas (2001); in Thailand, for indigenous representatives of the Asia-Pacific region (2003); in the United Republic of Tanzania, for English-speaking indigenous peoples' representatives of Africa (2004); in Morocco, for French-speaking indigenous representatives of the Great Lakes and Central, North and West Africa (2006); and in Australia, for indigenous peoples' representatives of the Pacific (2007). In addition, UNITAR contributed to the regional training session on conflict resolution and peacebuilding organized by 5 former participants for 100 indigenous and tribal representatives of north-east India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar, held in Assam, India, in 2007.

24. Indigenous participants in the UNITAR Training Programme to Enhance Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding engage in identifying sources of conflict and examine traditional negotiation and rights-based negotiation approaches. They are then trained in interest-based negotiation and practice this method in a number of simulations. Such an approach seeks to find a win-win solution to conflict situations by helping parties to become more effective at exploring one another's needs, aspirations, fears and concerns, and, working from these, to create innovative solutions which can address the interests of all concerned.

25. Senior indigenous experts, including members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as other specialists, the Special Rapporteurs on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, and on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources, as well representatives of regional organizations are invited to serve as resource persons for the training programme.

26. For both the international and regional training programmes, UNITAR works actively with Permanent Forum members and other indigenous experts in the design of its training programmes for indigenous peoples and invites members to serve as resource persons to address participants on the mandate and activities of the Forum, advise on the best ways to interact with the Forum and consult with participants on their respective areas of concern under the mandate of the Forum. Eight Forum members, including the Chairperson, have served as resource persons for UNITAR training programmes in the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region and Africa, and in the international programme. Reports on the Forum sessions are provided to each training participant in their handbook of reference materials. UNITAR looks forward to continued collaboration with the Permanent Forum and other indigenous experts on the capacity-building of indigenous representatives.

27. A participant handbook is prepared for each training programme which includes papers by indigenous experts, information on international and regional human rights mechanisms, chapters from the *United Nations Guide for Indigenous Peoples* and other relevant articles. Reports of the Special Rapporteurs focusing on indigenous issues, related United Nations resolutions, information on the Millennium Development Goals and now the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, will be included in the materials provided to each participant as reference materials in their handbook for the training programme.

28. Each training programme concludes with a "dialogue on a common vision for peace", providing participants the opportunity to highlight key lessons from the training and their mutual exchange, and to articulate next steps towards building a common vision for peace and development. Feedback from participants from each

region indicates they are applying these strategies and enhanced skills in their communities and in dialogue with Governments and other partners at the local level and in international forums.

VII. Regional training for the Pacific

29. The 2007 Regional Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives of the Pacific involved 31 indigenous women and men from Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia and was held in Canberra, Australia. Participants examined rights-based and interest-based negotiation models and engaged in negotiation simulations reflecting issues faced by their communities. Case studies and presentations were conducted on land and resource issues by senior indigenous experts from the Pacific, including a member of the Permanent Forum, and by other indigenous experts, as well as on inclusive models for participation and consultation, and constructive dialogue processes. Participants from the region have been organizing meetings and networks to share the knowledge and experience gained from the training with their colleagues, organizations and communities.

30. The 2007 Regional Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives of the Pacific was funded by the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and the Agency for Development and Cooperation of Switzerland. UNITAR is grateful for their support, which made this much-requested regional programme possible.

VIII. Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

31. As noted in General Assembly resolution 59/174 establishing the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, indigenous peoples continue to face a precarious economic and social situation and persistent grave violations of their human rights. The UNITAR training programme will continue to focus on building indigenous capacity for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous peoples and the constructive resolution of conflicts in the development, social, economic, health, human rights, environment and cultural areas.

32. In the Second Decade, indigenous representatives will be engaged in dialogue and negotiation on more issues of concern than in the First Decade. Intellectual property and traditional knowledge and resources, growing environmental pressures and strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals are just some of the areas of keen interest that can benefit from further indigenous participation. These emerging areas and the continued economic and social marginalization many indigenous peoples face will necessitate constructive approaches to promote and protect their rights and the further development of mechanisms to engage indigenous peoples in processes and decisions that affect them. With the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, efforts to

implement the Declaration, with a view to improving the quality of life in indigenous communities, will continue to be a priority concern.

33. The UNITAR training programme is designed to increase the effectiveness of indigenous representatives to engage in dialogue on decisions that affect them and to contribute to the constructive resolution of problems facing their communities in partnership with other concerned parties.

34. Indigenous experts and former participants are consulted in the design and planning of each UNITAR training session to ensure that the programme is addressing key concerns and evolving issues faced by indigenous peoples. They provide advice on cases to include from respective regions, make recommendations on senior resource persons as well as on participants and organizations who could best benefit from and contribute to the programme.

35. UNITAR has been involved in the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues since its formation and has participated in each session of the Permanent Forum.

IX. Planned UNITAR training sessions regarding indigenous issues in 2008-2009

36. The planned UNITAR training sessions regarding indigenous issues in 2008-2009, contingent on funding, are as follow:

- UNITAR 2008 Regional Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives (region to be finalized)
- UNITAR 2008 International Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives
- UNITAR 2009 Regional Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives (region to be determined)
- UNITAR 2009 International Training Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Capacities of Indigenous Peoples' Representatives.